

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2024

REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE: 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2024

“1026            RESHAPING: THE NEXT PHASE FOR TRANSFORMATION  
(REF) –

The reference from Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 was presented by the Director of Corporate Resources.

The Cabinet report set out proposals for the next phase of the Council's transformation programme, Reshaping. Reshaping Services was the transformational change programme launched in 2015 and which enabled the Council to mitigate the impact of austerity whilst delivering significant financial savings.

The Director advised that with a significant financial challenge facing the Council in the medium-term, it was now time for Reshaping to be refocused and the report set out a framework and early ideas for progressing transformational change under five themes of Target Operating Model, Service Transformation, Strengthening Communities, Digital Innovation and Economic Resilience.

The report had been referred to Committee as part of a process of engagement with various Council Committees, Forums and Networks and to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the development of the Programme.

Cabinet had recently considered, and approved work being undertaken to strengthen Vale of Glamorgan communities in response to a series of national Audit Wales reports on tackling poverty and a local report on how the Council worked with the third sector. The Council had engaged Cwmpas to work collaboratively on a programme of engagement with Council officers, Elected Members, the Third Sector, Town and Community Councils and social enterprises to address the recommendations in the reports but also to assist in the development of the new Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan for 2025-2030, a revised Town and Community Council Charter and a new Voluntary Sector Compact.

The Director then took the opportunity to thank those Town and Community Councils that had engaged with Cwmpas work to date and advised that the work would not only help with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis but would inform work across all of the Council's critical challenges as set out in its Annual Delivery Plan. A report on the Strengthening Communities theme work undertaken with Cwmpas would be brought back to the Committee in the future.

Following the Director's presentation, Councillor Campbell began debate on the matter by noting that community transfers had previously taken place in relation to bowls clubs and libraries and queried whether future community transfers would be following a similar example going forward. To which, the Director advised that the Council would be looking to do more around community transfers in terms of single use sports facilities, as well as the operation of those kinds of assets via community groups who had a single interest in the asset. The Council would also be looking at replicating asset transfers in terms of other single use sports facilities, for example playing facilities, as well as including the potential around community centres and other localised assets. There were facilities that, as a Local Authority, the Vale of Glamorgan would want to see continuing to be operated but would not be in a position to do so directly and therefore would look to work with other smaller organisations to do so, with the Council being a facilitator and an enabler.

The representative for Barry Town Council then advised that the Town Council had had previous experience with regards to community asset transfers, as well as with other Reshaping Services projects, and noted the Town Council's frustrations over the length of time it had taken to resolve paperwork and legal aspects in relation to asset transfers. Therefore, the representative questioned that, if Community Councils were to take on more Vale of Glamorgan services, would the process be streamlined to support the transfer process? In response, the Director advised that the representative's comments were consistent with what the Vale Council had heard from other Town and Community Council colleagues in terms of the length of time it had taken to follow the community asset transfer process. The matter was something that Councillor Wilson, as Cabinet portfolio holder, had asked officers to look into to ensure that a balance was achieved between the deal taking place and the continued operation of the service. The process had to be one that was reasonable and viable but not to the detriment of spending too much time on the deal that it detracted from delivering on the Council's commitments.

The representative for St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council then advised that their Community Council was one of the Councils that had tried to engage enthusiastically with community asset transfers previously back in 2018/19, however was disappointed by the lack of opportunity the Community Council had to bid to cut its own grass on the village green and also that there were different parts of the Vale of Glamorgan organisation moving at different speeds. Therefore, the representative asked whether there would be a central officer who could push efforts along and ensure that Town and Community Councils could be more involved and deliver more services to encourage local improvement. In response, the Director advised that when community asset transfers were discussed prior to the Covid 19 national pandemic, discussions were being had on the basis of the Local Authority handing over services to the Town and Community Councils and working on a relationship of equals where Town and Community Councils approached the Local Authority with examples of assets they wished to take on. However, it was fair to say that the financial situation that the Vale of Glamorgan Council now faced had significantly changed since 2018/19 and it was therefore timely to have conversations around the difficult decisions that the Council would inevitably have to take and therefore was

in a better position to talk with Town and Community Councils about the level of services the Vale of Glamorgan Council was in a position to provide. This would give Town and Community Councils a better and stronger indication of the type of assets that the Town and Community Council might want to consider working collaboratively with or indeed supplement in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Moving forward, the Director was working very closely with the Council's Strategic Leadership Team to assess how the Leadership Team would collectively ensure that the Council delivered on the reshaping framework and continue to engage with Town and Community Councils to understand the best way to approach discussions going forward.

In conclusion, the Chair of the Committee, who was also the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services, kindly asked if the representative of St. Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council could email them regarding grass cutting contracts in the St. Nicholas with Bonvilston area so that the matter may be looked in to further.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T both the Cabinet reference and appended report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the comments of the Committee, as set out within the meeting minute, be referred back to Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for decision

- (1) Having regard to the contents of both the reference and appended report on the next phase of the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping.
- (2) Having regard to discussion held at the meeting."